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ARMY CAN BETTER USE ITS SOLDIERS TRAINED IN CRITICAL  
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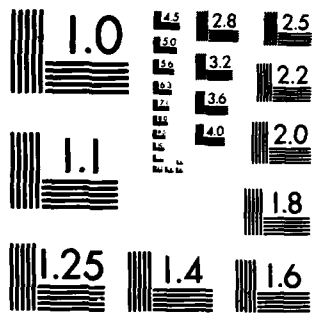
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BY THE U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

## Report To The Secretary Of The Army

AD-A141 423

### Army Can Better Use Its Soldiers Trained In Critical Shortage Occupations

Many soldiers trained in critical undermanned occupations are being assigned tasks outside their prime skill areas. In visiting five Army installations, GAO found that some of these soldiers were noncommissioned officers--the Army's primary trainers at the unit level--and soldiers who had received cash bonuses for working in their skill areas.

GAO found that this occurred because of:

- (1)--Circumstances beyond the installations' control, such as assignment of soldiers by the Army above authorized levels, unexpected security clearance delays, and equipment-personnel mismatch problems.
- (2)--Installation commanders' judgement that other jobs are more important than the ones soldiers were trained to do.

GAO identified several opportunities for reducing such practices and recommended the corrective actions. DOD agreed with GAO's recommendations and outlined changes that have been made or are underway to improve Army systems for distributing, assigning and using its personnel.

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UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

NATIONAL SECURITY AND  
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

B-214378

The Honorable John O. Marsh, Jr.  
The Secretary of the Army

Dear Mr. Secretary:

This report discusses the Army's use of soldiers trained in critical shortage occupations.

The report contains recommendations to you on pages 13 and 14. As you know, 31 U.S.C. 720 requires the head of a Federal agency to submit a written statement on actions taken on our recommendations to the House Committee on Government Operations and the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs not later than 60 days after the date of the report. A written statement must also be submitted to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations with an agency's first request for appropriations made more than 60 days after the date of the report.

We are sending copies of this report to the Secretary of Defense; the Director, Office of Management and Budget; and the Chairmen, House and Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Armed Services, House Committee on Government Operations, and Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs.

Sincerely yours,

Frank C. Conahan  
Director



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U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING  
OFFICE REPORT TO THE  
SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

ARMY CAN BETTER USE  
ITS SOLDIERS TRAINED IN  
CRITICAL SHORTAGE OCCUPATIONS

D I G E S T

In light of long-standing shortages of trained personnel in such critical military occupational specialties (MOSSs) as combat arms, high technology, and intelligence, there have been continuing efforts on the part of Army officials to ensure that--to the maximum degree possible--soldiers trained in these skills are using them in their assignments. Despite these efforts, however, Army officials acknowledged that many soldiers trained in these critical skills still are being asked to perform tasks outside of their prime skill areas.

GAO visited five Army installations and interviewed soldiers in 19 undermanned occupations deemed critical by the Army to determine (1) the extent to which they were working outside their occupations, (2) why they were doing so, and (3) whether opportunities for reducing such utilization practices could be identified.

WHAT DID GAO FIND?

In each of the five installations GAO visited, soldiers were identified who were performing tasks outside of their prime skill areas; the range was from 13 to 25 percent. The group of those working outside of their prime skill areas included some soldiers who had received cash bonuses (these soldiers are required by Army policy to work in their prime skill areas), as well as many noncommissioned officers, the Army's primary on-the-job trainers at the unit level. (See pp. 5 to 7.) GAO found that situations over which local commanders had no control had caused many of the soldiers to be assigned tasks outside of their prime skill areas. For example,

--Installations had been assigned soldiers with skills for which the installations had no authorization. GAO also found instances where installations were assigned more soldiers than they were authorized or needed. (See p. 8.)

--Because of delays in processing their security clearances, intelligence soldiers at three of the five installations had to work in other jobs. Although the Defense Investigative Service had established a standard of 90 days for processing such clearances, during fiscal year 1982, processing averaged about 171 days. (See p. 9.)

--Equipment-personnel mismatch problems also caused installations to use soldiers in unrelated jobs. For example, at one installation, soldiers trained in critical intelligence skills had to be given unrelated tasks because needed equipment had been sent to an installation with a higher priority mission. At another installation, mechanics were assigned other tasks because the equipment they were responsible for repairing was new and needed few repairs. (See pp. 9 and 10.)

In addition to being forced to use soldiers for tasks outside of their prime skill areas for reasons beyond their control, GAO also found that installation commanders sometimes chose to use soldiers outside their occupation because they (1) considered other jobs more important than the jobs the soldiers were trained to do, (2) believed that it was not necessary for soldiers to work full-time in their occupations to sustain their skills and that the soldiers could be "borrowed" on a part-time basis, or (3) needed people to do garrison work (working at the gymnasium or as claims clerks for the legal office, for example) for which no positions were authorized. Such practices are possible because the Army has not identified Army-wide critical shortages and set Army-wide policy on the appropriate use of soldiers with critical skills. In line with broad Army policy, such utilization decisions on how soldiers can be used are within the discretionary authority of commanders. (See pp. 11 and 12.)

#### WHAT DOES GAO RECOMMEND?

GAO believes that the Army can do more to ensure that soldiers trained in critical shortage skills are performing tasks within their skill areas.

In order to more efficiently and effectively use the skills of soldiers trained in critical shortage occupations, the Secretary of the Army should:

- examine and resolve those assignment, security clearance, and equipment-related problems that cause some soldiers to work outside of their occupations,
- develop an Army-wide listing of critical shortage occupations and issue policy guidance to all commanders on the discretionary use of soldiers with such skills outside of their occupations,
- ensure compliance by commanders, within the limits of their discretionary authority, to Army policy requiring the utilization of bonus recipients in their prime occupations, and
- examine whether additional Army-wide policy should be established to limit the discretionary authority of commanders to utilize NCO's in select critical shortage occupations for tasks outside of their prime occupations.

#### AGENCY COMMENTS AND GAO's EVALUATION

On January 25, 1984, GAO met with Department of Defense and Army representatives to discuss their comments on the draft report. DOD agreed with the findings, conclusions, and recommendations in the draft report and provided information on the steps which have been taken or are underway to correct the problems identified. (See pp. 14 and 15.)

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**ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>DCSPER</b>	<b>Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel</b>
<b>FORSCOM</b>	<b>U.S. Army Forces Command</b>
<b>GAO</b>	<b>General Accounting Office</b>
<b>MILPERCEN</b>	<b>Military Personnel Center</b>
<b>MOS</b>	<b>military occupational specialty</b>
<b>NCO</b>	<b>noncommissioned officer</b>

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In fiscal year 1983 testimony, the Army's Assistant Secretary for Manpower and Reserve Affairs said that the Army must more efficiently and economically use its resources in light of shortages in such critical military occupational specialties (MOSS) as combat arms, high technology, and intelligence. To this end, the Army is concerned that soldiers trained in such critical shortage skills work in the MOSSs in which they were trained. Using such soldiers outside their MOSSs creates both short- and long-term problems. In the short-term, soldiers working outside their MOSSs are not doing the high priority jobs the Army says need to be done. In the long-term, soldiers may lose proficiency in their trained skills, especially those that deteriorate rapidly without practice, such as language skills. In contrast, using soldiers in the MOSSs in which they were trained could improve individual soldier proficiency and morale, provide sufficient skilled soldiers to train other soldiers, and ultimately improve readiness.

The Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (DCSPER) and the Military Personnel Center (MILPERCEN) are responsible for ensuring that enough skilled soldiers are available in each MOS, especially the critical MOSSs experiencing severe shortages and that such soldiers are appropriately assigned. DCSPER establishes Army policy and provides guidance on personnel acquisition, distribution, assignment, and utilization. Using Army authorizations and guidelines from the U.S. Forces Command (FORSCOM), MILPERCEN assigns soldiers by primary MOS and rank to fill unit positions having valid authorizations.

Once soldiers are assigned to units, Army policy allows commanders wide discretion in using the soldiers in tasks deemed important. For soldiers in MOSSs short Army-wide, as well as for soldiers in surplus MOSSs, commanders may elect to use them for tasks within their MOSSs; they also may assign soldiers duties closely related to their MOS; they even may use soldiers for tasks that need doing but have no relationship to the soldiers' MOS skills. Most of this latter utilization involves garrison work<sup>1</sup> and occurs on an informal basis; that is, soldiers assigned to appropriate MOSSs are "borrowed" for temporary details to unrelated jobs.

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<sup>1</sup>Garrison work involves administering, operating, and maintaining all installation facilities, providing administrative and logistical support to activities at the installation, and providing services for active duty and retired military personnel and their dependents.

**PREVIOUS REPORTS HIGHLIGHT  
LONG-STANDING CONCERNS**

Soldiers working outside their MOSs is a longstanding concern which has been reported on over the past 5 years by GAO and Defense and Army audit groups. In a February 1978 report,<sup>2</sup> we recommended, among other measures, that the Secretary of the Army more efficiently manage the assignment and use of soldiers in each MOS.

A September 1978 report<sup>3</sup> dealt specifically with improvements the Army could make when using combat enlisted personnel for garrison work. We recommended that the Secretary of Defense develop guidelines recognizing the Army's need to use combat personnel for garrison duty and, to the extent practicable, have such garrison duty enhance individual skill proficiency and unit combat capability.

Our 1982 report<sup>4</sup> on the Army's skill qualification testing program showed that over 36 percent of the 1,333 soldiers surveyed spent half to all of their time working outside their MOSs during the 6 months before their most recent skill qualification tests. Soldiers also expressed concern that working outside their MOSs could reduce job proficiency and lead to low test scores which, in turn, could affect promotion and reenlistment opportunities.

The Army and the Defense Department have also issued studies on soldiers--especially bonus recipients--working outside their MOSs. In 1980 the Army Audit Agency reported that from 7 to 20 percent of the soldiers who received bonuses at five installations worked outside their MOSs. These bonuses totaled about \$8 million. Additional periodic reports on these concerns have been issued by the Army Inspector General and Personnel Management Assistance System teams.

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<sup>2</sup>"Management and Use of Army Enlisted Personnel--What Needs to Be Done" (FPCD-78-6, Feb. 16, 1978).

<sup>3</sup>"The Army Can Improve Peacetime Use of Deployable Enlisted Personnel" (FPCD-78-66, Sept. 7, 1978).

<sup>4</sup>"The Army Needs to Modify Its System For Measuring Individual Soldier Proficiency" (FPCD-82-28, Mar. 30, 1982).

## OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

This study of the Army's use of soldiers was prompted by three considerations:

- The long-standing concern of the Army about shortages of soldiers in critical skills.
- The long time period during which some soldiers with such skills have been working outside their MOSs.
- The importance of such soldiers working in the MOSs in which they were trained.

Our objectives were to examine (1) the extent to which soldiers in selected critical MOSs were working outside their occupations, (2) why they were doing so, and (3) whether opportunities for reducing such utilization practices could be identified.

To determine the extent to which soldiers were working outside of their MOSs and because the Army has no official list of critical shortage MOSs, we developed our own list of 19 MOSs which DCSPER and MILPERCEN officials agreed were short Army-wide and critical to accomplishing the Army's mission. (See app. I for a complete listing of the MOSs and the rationale used for their selection.) We then interviewed a scientifically selected sample of Active Army enlisted personnel in the 19 MOSs at Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Fort Campbell, Kentucky; Fort Carson, Colorado; Fort Hood, Texas; and Fort Meade, Maryland. (App. II contains our methodology for site and sample selection.)

To determine the extent to which soldiers were working outside their MOSs during the year prior to our interview (conducted during mid-to-late 1982), we compared soldiers' descriptions (confirmed by supervisors or by documents) of duties performed, regardless of assignment, with what Army Regulation 611-201 described as the duties of the MOS. We defined soldiers as working in their MOSs if they worked in their primary, career path, or substitutable MOSs more than 70 percent of the time for 10 months or more. We used this criterion because it is commonly used by Army officials in their own studies.

To determine why soldiers were working outside their MOSs, we reviewed each soldier's personnel file and discussed the work situation with the unit manager who decided to use the soldier outside of the MOS. After analyzing the files, we discussed the extent of soldiers working outside their MOSs, the causes for it, and possible solutions with installation command representatives, unit managers, and DCSPER and MILPERCEN officials.

To gain a general understanding of the Army's distribution and assignment systems, we talked with officials from Army Headquarters and FORSCOM.

We made this review from June 1982 to November 1983 in accordance with generally accepted government audit standards.

## CHAPTER 2

### SOLDIERS ARE STILL BEING USED

#### OUTSIDE THEIR MOSS

The problems noted in previous reports concerning soldiers working outside their MOSSs persist. Although situations varied at each installation visited, soldiers were still being used outside their MOSSs at all locations. Many of the soldiers working outside their MOSSs were noncommissioned officers (NCOs), the Army's primary trainers at the unit level, and bonus recipients who are required to work within their MOSSs.

#### SOLDIERS WERE WORKING OUTSIDE THEIR MOSS AT EACH INSTALLATION VISITED

Each installation we visited had different missions and, consequently, varying numbers and types of occupations, but all had soldiers working outside their MOSSs in the 19 occupations sampled. At the five installations, we found that from 13 to 25 percent of the soldiers interviewed were working outside their MOSSs. We projected that, for the five installations, as many as 1,761 soldiers could be in this category.

#### PROJECTED NUMBER OF SOLDIERS WORKING OUTSIDE THEIR MOSSs

<u>Installation</u>	<u>Number of soldiers</u>		<u>Interviewed</u>		<u>Projected to be working out- side MOS (notes a and b)</u>
	<u>In universe</u>	<u>Inter- viewed</u>	<u>working outside MOS Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	
Fort Bragg	2,908	118	21	18	518
Fort Campbell	1,839	119	18	13	246
Fort Carson	1,246	152	38	25	314
Fort Hood	2,823	118	25	21	598
Fort Meade	491	104	18	17	85
Total	<u>9,307</u>	<u>611</u>	<u>118</u>		<u>1,761</u>

a/Figures are rounded. Thus, the number of soldiers in the universe times the percent working outside MOS will not equal the number projected to be working outside the MOS.

b/Based on a 95-percent confidence level, plus or minus 4 percent.

Most of the soldiers working outside their MOSs said that they were doing so most of the time. For example, 64 percent said that they worked outside their MOSs 100 percent of the time and nearly 75 percent worked outside their MOSs about 80 percent of the time.

#### NCOs ARE WORKING OUTSIDE OF THEIR MOSs

Many of the soldiers who said they worked outside their MOSs were NCOs in grades E-5 to E-7. At the five installations, this figure ranged from 24 to 61 percent. For the 19 MOSs studied, we projected that 558 NCOs were working outside their MOSs, as the table below shows.

<u>Installation</u>	<u>NCO's working outside MOS</u>		<u>Number of NCOs projected to be working outside MOS (Note a)</u>
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent of interviewed</u>	
Fort Bragg	5	( 4.2%)	122
Fort Campbell	4	( 3.4%)	63
Fort Carson	13	( 8.6%)	106
Fort Hood	9	( 7.6%)	215
Fort Meade	<u>11</u>	(10.6%)	<u>52</u>
Total	<u>42</u>		<u>558</u>
<u>a/Based on a 95-percent confidence level, plus or minus 4 percent.</u>			

Despite reports by GAO<sup>5</sup> and others that Army training at the unit level is handicapped by an absence of qualified NCO's (the units' prime trainers), the Army has no policy that prohibits commanders from using critically skilled NCO's, other than bonus recipients, for non-training tasks outside of their MOS.

<sup>5</sup>"The Army Needs to Modify its system for Measuring Individual Soldier Proficiency" (FPCD-82-28) March 30, 1982; and "The Army Needs to Improve Individual Soldier Training in its Units (FPCD-81-29), March 31, 1981.

**BONUS RECIPIENTS ARE WORKING  
OUTSIDE THEIR MOSS**

Defense Directive 1304.22 and Army Regulations (600-200) require that soldiers who receive cash bonuses for enlisting or reenlisting in certain MOSSs (because they are short Army-wide or judged critical to the Army's mission) should be assigned to work in that occupation. We found, however, that these policies are not always being uniformly followed.

Of the 118 soldiers interviewed who were working outside their MOSSs, 47 (or 40 percent) were bonus recipients. Three of the 47 bonus recipients were assigned to an unrelated MOS, the remaining 44 were assigned on record to an appropriate MOS, but had been "borrowed" for an extended period to perform other tasks.

For the 19 MOSSs studied, the projected number of bonus recipients working outside their MOSS at the five installations visited was 610, as shown below.

<b><u>BONUS RECIPIENTS WORKING OUTSIDE MOS</u></b>			<b>Number of Bonus Recip- ients Pro- jected to be working out- side MOS (note a)</b>
<b><u>Installation</u></b>	<b><u>Number</u></b>	<b><u>Percent of interviewed</u></b>	
Fort Bragg	5	( 4.2%)	122
Fort Campbell	7	( 5.9%)	108
Fort Carson	17	(11.6%)	141
Fort Hood	8	( 6.8%)	192
Fort Meade	<u>10</u>	( 9.6%)	<u>47</u>
Total	<u>47</u>		<u>610</u>
<b>a/Based on a 95 percent confidence level, plus or minus 4 percent.</b>			

### CHAPTER 3

#### CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND COMMANDERS'

##### CONTROL CAUSE SOME SOLDIERS

##### TO WORK OUTSIDE THEIR MOSSs

Many of the soldiers identified by GAO as performing tasks outside of their prime skill areas were doing so for reasons beyond the control of their installation commander. Such reasons included errors by the Army in the assignment of personnel to the installation, unexpected delays in the granting of necessary security clearances, and the absence of equipment or equipment problems on which soldiers with the critical skills could work.

##### ARMY ASSIGNMENT SYSTEM DOES NOT ALWAYS SEND SOLDIERS WHERE AUTHORIZED

Although the 19 MOSSs we studied were in short supply Army-wide (see app. III), we found that some installations had excess soldiers in some of these MOSSs and were using the soldiers in other jobs, sometimes unrelated to their MOSSs.

Two installations we visited had been assigned soldiers despite the fact that the installations had no authorizations for them. For example, light track vehicle mechanics (63T improved TOW vehicle/infantry fighting vehicle/cavalry fighting vehicle systems mechanics) are in short supply Army-wide. The Army reported a need for about 4,500 light track vehicle soldiers and had only 3,500 as of March 31, 1982. During our visit, we found 13 light track vehicle soldiers at one installation and 2 at another, even though the installations had no authorizations for them.

The assignment system also sent several installations more soldiers than authorized. For example, tactical communication systems operator/mechanics (31V) were in short supply Army-wide as of March 31, 1982. Yet some installations visited reported having more soldiers than authorized (and needed), which necessitated their using the soldiers outside their prime skill areas. The table below illustrates the number of 31V soldiers authorized compared to the number assigned at the installations visited.

<u>Installation</u>	<u>No. of 31V soldiers</u>	
	<u>authorized</u>	<u>assigned</u>
Fort Bragg	474	522
Fort Campbell	214	206
Fort Carson	193	192
Fort Hood	377	335
Fort Meade	14	17

DELAYS IN PROCESSING SPECIAL  
SECURITY CLEARANCES CAUSE  
INTELLIGENCE SOLDIERS TO WORK  
OUTSIDE THEIR MOSS

Three of the five Army installations visited used intelligence soldiers for other jobs because the soldiers had not received necessary clearances. Army officials at Fort Meade stated that an average of 60 soldiers are awaiting security clearance at any given time during the year and cannot work in their MOSSs.

The major portion of time spent processing a security clearance is for the special background investigation. Although the Defense Investigative Service established 90 days as the expected processing time, during fiscal year 1982, processing averaged about 171 days. While waiting for their clearances, most of the intelligence soldiers worked in administrative jobs, typing and filing.

Some of these soldiers were recent recruits and had just completed expensive training in language skills. A few were experienced soldiers whose clearances had been suspended pending an investigation of allegations that they had committed some act that made them a security risk, such as using drugs.

Defense officials were aware of the processing delays and hope to reduce the backlog by obtaining additional investigatory staff. Recently, in separate reports, GAO<sup>1</sup> and the Defense Audit Service recommended that Defense reprogram some of its budget to give the Defense Investigative Service more money and additional staff and change some of the policies to reduce the processing delays.

Intelligence soldiers require not only initial clearances but also special paperwork releasing them from an assignment at one installation before they can be allowed access to classified information in another assignment at another installation. Some soldiers we interviewed were not working in their MOS because they were waiting for these release documents.

SOME ARMY INSTALLATIONS DID NOT HAVE  
EQUIPMENT OR WORK FOR SOLDIERS

Some installations used soldiers in other jobs because they did not have equipment or work. At installations visited, lack of equipment or work involved primarily intelligence MOSSs, but occasionally involved other MOSSs.

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<sup>1</sup>"Faster Processing of DOD Personnel Security Clearances Could Avoid Millions In Losses" (GGD-81-105, Sept. 15, 1981).

For example, at Fort Carson, 12 electronic warfare/signal intelligence noncommunications interceptor (98J) soldiers were performing other tasks because their equipment had been transferred to another installation with a higher priority mission.

The Army has recognized that these 98J soldiers lack equipment and has established a program to send them to strategic units to work for several weeks or months in order to keep up their skill proficiency. Army officials told us that they also plan to field simulators which will allow soldiers to practice their skills in tactical units.

In a few cases, soldiers could not work in their repair and maintenance MOSs because of an absence of problems in new equipment. For example, because few repair problems have surfaced in the improved tow vehicle/infantry fighting vehicle/cavalry fighting vehicle, the 45T turret mechanics who are assigned to this equipment have little to do and generally work in unrelated jobs in the motor pool.

## CHAPTER 4

### COMMANDERS SOMETIMES CHOSE

#### TO USE SOLDIERS OUTSIDE THEIR MOSs

Exercising their discretionary authority, some commanders used soldiers for tasks outside of their prime skill areas because they considered the unrelated jobs more important than the ones the soldiers were trained to do.

#### TYPES OF JOBS CONSIDERED MORE IMPORTANT

In the absence of policy guidance on utilizing soldiers with critical shortage skills, commanders have considerable latitude in how they use soldiers to carry out the unit's mission.

Jobs that commanders often considered more important than a soldier's assigned MOS were (1) track and wheeled vehicle repair work, (2) facilities repair and utilities work, and (3) supply functions. Sometimes, commanders judged that their units could not function without certain services, such as those provided by supply clerks or armorers, and persons with the appropriate MOS skills were not available. In other cases, the commanders perceived that it was not necessary for the soldiers to work full-time in their MOSs to sustain desired skill levels and that they could be "borrowed" on a part-time basis.

#### UNITS SUPPLY SOLDIERS FOR NONAUTHORIZED WORK

Soldiers sometimes are called upon to work outside their MOSs because installation or unit commanders need someone to do a job for which no position is authorized. We found soldiers working outside their MOSs for this reason at all the installations visited.

In peacetime, installations use personnel with combat skills to accomplish garrison work. Although garrison work is necessary, the installations did not have authorized military positions because their personnel authorizations are based on wartime needs.

While some garrison work may be related to a soldier's MOS, we found that soldiers at all five installations were working in unrelated jobs. These duties included working at the gymnasium, drawing briefing charts, and working as claims clerks for the legal office. We reported similar utilization of personnel in our September 1978 report.

Soldiers working outside their MOSs had spent at least one-third of their time on these tasks over several months. Although none of these work details were long-term or permanent jobs, they all took soldiers away from their primary duties for significant time periods.

In discussing this situation with Army officials, they said that it is part of every soldier's duty to do these types of jobs and when the installation lacks enough civilians to do the work required, it must be spread evenly among the units. While the installation commanders try not to assign bonus personnel to work outside their MOS for over 90 days, they generally make no special effort for soldiers with critical skills who do not receive bonuses.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS,

### AND AGENCY COMMENTS AND OUR EVALUATION

#### CONCLUSIONS

GAO believes that the Army can do more to ensure that soldiers trained in critical shortage skills are performing tasks within their skill areas. Specifically, we believe that the problems identified with the assignment system, security clearances and equipment-personnel mismatches can be addressed and overcome. We also believe that commanders can be held more accountable for compliance with the policy provisions governing the utilization of bonus recipients. While we agree with the Army's view that commanders need discretionary authority to utilize their personnel for the jobs that need doing, we nevertheless believe that the identification of Army-wide critical skill shortages and the provision of Army-wide guidance on how best to utilize personnel with such skills would improve the Army's overall effectiveness. We also believe that the Army's need for qualified NCO trainers at the unit level could justify further limitations on the commander's authority.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

In order to more efficiently and effectively utilize the skills of soldiers trained in critical shortage occupations, the Secretary of the Army should:

- examine and resolve those assignment, security clearance, and equipment-related problems that cause some soldiers to work outside of their occupations.
- develop an Army-wide listing of critical shortage occupations and issue policy guidance to all commanders on the discretionary use of soldiers with such skills outside of their occupations.
- ensure compliance by commanders, within the limits of their discretionary authority, to Army policy requiring the utilization of bonus recipients in their prime occupations, and
- examine whether additional Army-wide policy should be established to limit the discretionary authority of commanders to utilize NCO's in select critical shortage occupations for tasks outside of their prime occupations.

## AGENCY COMMENTS AND OUR EVALUATION

On January 25, 1984 we met with DOD and Army officials to discuss their comments on the draft report. The officials agreed with the findings, conclusions, and recommendations and provided information on the steps being taken to correct the problems indentified.

To address the problems that resulted from skill/assignment mismatches the Army is in the process of upgrading hardware and software systems to refine the enlisted distribution process. One system for example, FORECAST, should provide a real-time capability in identifying requirements and matching skill levels in the assignment process. Currently, the assignment system is a batch processing system and a significant time lag exists between the identification of a requirement and the assignment of a soldier with the proper MOS. During that lag the requirement can change resulting in a mismatch between the needed skill and the assigned MOS. We were told that FORECAST should be fully operational Fiscal Year 1986.

In August 1983, the Army began the Documentation Modernization (DOC MOD) Program to analyze problems associated with the Army's documentation process for manpower and equipment and to develop solutions. Efforts continue to standardize equipment among units and to modernize the data base. The Army believes these efforts should help enhance skill/assignment mismatches.

To address the problem of intelligence soldiers assigned to work outside their MOS because the soldiers have not received the necessary security clearances, DOD told us an additional 700 spaces were allocated to Defense Investigative Service (DIS) for fiscal year 1982. As a result of the additional staff, DIS has reduced the average time to complete a background investigation from 171 days in fiscal year 1982 to 80 days as of December 30, 1983.

To address the problem of bonus recipients serving in out-of-skill assignments DOD has revised and reissued DCD Instruction 1304.22 dated April 20, 1983 to reemphaize that bonus recipients are expected to serve in the bonus speciality for the full period of the reenlistment. The new Instruction allows for waivers under certain circumstances but requires that the waivers be reviewed by the Secretary of the Army or his designee. The Instruction also requires that the services through command channels to the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Manpower, Installations and Logistics. The Army has implemented the revised instruction in Army Regulation 600-200, chapter 9.

DOD and Army officials stated that while commanders appropriately have latitude in using assigned soldiers they are guided by specific provisions in personnel management regulations. Personnel management assistance teams check on proper utilization of soldiers and cause corrective action to be taken where necessary. Further, the Inspector General includes soldier utilization as part of his inspections. In response to our exit conference, Army officials stated that policies included in personnel management regulations are being reemphasized to Commanders. For instance an October 4, 1983 memorandum entitled "Enlisted Distribution plan--Policy Guidance" to commanders, stated that commanders need to place renewed emphasis on assigning soldiers in authorized positions. Further, the annual policy guidance memorandum included as an attachment a list of MOSs projected to be critically short in fiscal year 1984. This list and the Enlistment and Selective Reenlistment Bonus lists serve as management tools to assist commanders in identifying shortages skills.

In addition, DOD and Army officials providing comments, said they plan to examine whether additional Armywide policy is warranted and take appropriate action.

METHODOLOGY FOR SELECTING MOS

Because the Army had no official list of critical MOSs, we developed a list to use in our work. Several commands had developed their own lists using various criteria, including MOSs receiving bonuses, being at 80 percent or less of authorized strength, expecting change in authorized strength, having limited training spaces, experiencing retention or recruitment problems, and receiving new equipment. To select the MOSs to study, we identified the Army MOSs that were on four or more of the nine "critical" lists and were in short supply Army-wide as of March 31, 1982. We expanded our selection to include MOSs on three critical lists, short Army-wide, and having at least 500 soldiers in the MOS. We added three combat arms MOSs that historically met this criteria but were temporarily removed from one critical list (reenlistment bonus list) because of lack of funds. We deleted one MOS that met the criteria but had no history of receiving bonuses, which is the Army's primary indication of criticality. We deleted another MOS because Forces Command installations, at which we performed our work, had only 2 of the 685 soldiers in this MOS.

DCSPER and MILPERCEN officials agreed that the MOSs in our selection were the most critical MOSs in short supply, but they requested that we add one MOS (05H electronic warfare/signal intelligence MORSE Interceptor) to our list because of the criticality of intelligence skills (long training time and recruiting and retention problems). The following list shows the MOSs studied.

<u>MOS</u>	<u>Career management field</u>	<u>MOS title</u>
05H	98	Electronic Warfare/Signal Intelligence MORSE Interceptor
11C	11	Indirect Fire Infantryman (Mortarman)
11H	11	Heavy Antiarmor Weapons Infantryman (TOW gunner)
13C	13	TACFIRE Operations Specialist
13R	13	Field Artillery Firefinder Radar Operator
17K	96	Ground Surveillance Radar Crewman
19K	19	M1 ABRAMS Armor Crewman
21G	27	PERSHING Electronics Material Specialist
27E	27	TOW/Dragon Repairer
27N	27	Forward Area Alerting Radar Repairer
31V	31	Tactical Communications System Operator/Mechanic
33S	33	Electronic Warfare/Interceptor Systems Repairer

## APPENDIX I

## APPENDIX I

5N	63	M60 A1/A3 Tank Turret Mechanic
45T	63	Improved TOW Vehicle/Infantry Fighting Vehicle/Cavalry Fighting Vehicle Turret Mechanic
54E	54	Nuclear Biological Chemical Specialist
63T	63	Improved TOW Vehicle/Infantry Fighting Vehicle/Cavalry Fighting Vehicle Systems Mechanic
98C	98	Electronic Warfare/Signal Intelligence Analyst
98G	98	Electronic Warfare/Signal Intelligence Voice Interceptor
98J	98	Electronic Warfare/Signal Intelligence Noncommunications Interceptor

METHODOLOGY FOR SITE AND SAMPLE SELECTION

After selecting the 19 MOSs, we examined soldier distribution by MOS as of March 31, 1982, to identify the installations in the continental United States with the largest number of soldiers in the 19 MOSs. We selected the 4 Forces Command installations and one intelligence/command installation with the largest number of soldiers in the 19 MOSs. We did not include Army Training and Doctrine Command installations in our analysis because Army officials told us that soldiers at these locations often work outside their MOSs to support the schools located there. The number of soldiers at the five installations selected comprise 22 percent of the Army-wide population in the 19 MOSs selected as of March 31, 1982.

We selected our samples of soldiers to interview from a list of all soldiers at the installations with the 19 critical MOSs, ordered by Social Security number, and then numbered sequentially. Using a computer-generated list of random numbers for each universe, we selected those soldiers whose sequential numbers matched the random numbers generated. We determined the required sample size (number of soldiers to interview) for each installation using the Table of Suggested Sample Sizes for a 95-percent confidence level, plus or minus 4 percent. We increased the sample size to allow for soldiers who could not be available (for example, those on extended travel, in jail, or in the hospital) and validated reasons given for soldiers' nonavailability.

Results of each of the statistical samples can be projected only to the installation from which the sample was taken. In projecting each sample, we are 95 percent confident that the results we obtained are within 4 percent of the results we would have obtained from interviewing all soldiers in the 19 MOSs at the installations.

NUMBER OF SOLDIERS AUTHORIZED  
COMPARED TO THE NUMBER  
ASSIGNED FOR THE 19 MOSSs EXAMINED

MOS	Type of skill	Number of soldiers (Worldwide as of 3-31-82)		Percent short
		Authorized	Assigned	
05H	Intelligence	1,609	1,633	a6
11C	Infantry	11,607	11,318	2
11H	Infantry	7,774	7,564	3
13C	Field artillery	642	538	16
13R	Field artillery	274	222	19
17K	Intelligence	1,458	1,340	8
19K	Armor	951	758	20
21G	Missile repair	219	161	26
27E	Missile repair	837	732	13
27N	Radar repair	196	132	33
31V	Communications	5,625	5,585	1
33S	Intelligence			
	equipment repair	1,115	864	23
45N	Turret repair	892	860	4
45T	Turret repair	405	145	64
54E	Nuclear, biological, chemical	5,310	4,691	12
63T	Vehicle repair	4,496	3,521	22
98C	Intelligence	1,899	1,631	14
98G	Intelligence	2,223	2,016	9
98J	Intelligence	696	479	31

<sup>a</sup>The Army's goal is for the number of soldiers assigned to exceed the number authorized because at least 55 percent of the positions are overseas and soldiers must be given assignments in the U.S. periodically for morale reasons. The Army goal for this skill is to have 108 percent, or 1,737 of the authorized strength of 1,609.

REASONS WHY INSTALLATIONS  
USED SOLDIERS OUTSIDE THEIR MOSS

<u>Reason</u>	<u>Percent of time each reason was cited by installation</u>
Not controllable by installation:	
Distribution errors	14
Lack of security clearance	12
Lack of equipment or work	9
Miscellaneous uncontrollable situations	13
Controllable by installation:	
Installation viewed other job more important	32
Soldier needed for special details	<u>20</u>
	<u>100</u>

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